

1952, at a dinner in St. John's Church Hall. Charter officers included President Joseph Gagliardo, Vice President Irving Crabb, Secretary William Barleson, Treasurer Thomas Cardoza, Sergeant-at-Arms Ray Madruga, and Charter Board Members Sal Cracolice, Ben Rodgers, and Clarence Smith.

For years, the club held its meetings on Mondays at noon at the Cozy Kitchen on Main Street in Milpitas. In the 1980's, the Big Yellow House and Calamity Jane's were the meeting sites, until the Holiday Inn Hotel, now the Crowne Plaza Hotel, became the club's home.

An active member of Rotary District 5170, which consists of 55 clubs in Alameda, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties, the Milpitas Rotary Club's former president, Denny Weisgerber, served as District governor in 1999-2000.

I am proud to recognize the Milpitas Rotary Club on its 50th anniversary. I am confident this club will continue to improve our community, as well as the country and the world, for years to come.

KAZAKHSTAN IS THE STRONGEST U.S. ALLY IN CENTRAL ASIA

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2002

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, Kazakhstan, the largest country in Central Asia, is a relatively new friend of the United States, but they have become staunch allies with strong economic and political ties to America. They work side by side with us in the war against the terrorists, and their commitment to democracy is part of the fiber of their society.

Kazakhstan has been helpful in many ways during the recent fighting in Afghanistan, and today is looking at this neighbor's future.

When the guns fall silent in Afghanistan, the rebuilding of that nation must already be well underway. The Afghans have lost many years of what should have been a civil society. The twin curses of war and famine have spread throughout their land. Now it is time for their neighbors and friends to help rebuild Afghanistan and bring the country fully into the community of nations. A politically stable Afghanistan will not harbor terrorists and will emerge as a partner in the increasingly critical Central Asian region.

Kazakhstan recently played host to the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, who met with the Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbayev. During the joint press conference Secretary Rumsfeld noted, "We are partners in the global war on terrorism, and we discussed the situation in Afghanistan as well as our common interest in an independent, economically healthy, and secure Afghanistan."

Kazakhstan, with its developing society and emphasis on democracy, is an ideal source of the help the Afghans so badly need. Kazakhstan can be a model for an emerging society and stable economy in Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan has already been providing humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people. Three thousand tons of grain have already made the journey from Astana to Kabul. The U.N. World Food Program has also signed contracts for 100,000 tons of grain at prices well below world market prices. Beyond this,

the government of Kazakhstan is building a database of individuals who have special skills needed for the rebuilding of Afghanistan and have volunteered to help. You might call it a "Central Asian Peace Corps." Ironically, many of these volunteers have personal experience in Afghanistan where they served as unwilling draftees in the Soviet Army.

These activities, at both the government and the individual volunteer level speak volumes about the similarities between Americans and Kazakhs. Both respond quickly to a neighbor's need.

The pluralistic society being sought for Afghanistan is one that Americans will feel comfortable with. The people of Kazakhstan already enjoy a free and open society where religion and the will to succeed are prerogatives of the individual. In Kazakhstan, debate is enlivened by the presence of 17 political parties, 1,600 newspapers and broadcast entities and more than 130 ethnic groups. All have their own points of view and are not timid about voicing them. Kazakhstan is a Muslim-majority country, but, while synagogues are being attacked in Western Europe, they are being built in Kazakhstan. New houses of worship are also being built in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan itself is a country of enormous economic potential and good relations between Washington and Astana are ever more important.

With predicted oil reserves of 100 billion barrels or more, Kazakhstan will play a key role in easing America's dependence on current energy sources. The availability of Kazakh oil will help stabilize world markets and keep domestic prices in check.

Thousands of Americans go to work every day in Kazakhstan. Most work in the energy sector, but Americans have also become a common site in the towns and villages of the country. We work well with the people of Kazakhstan, and many friendships have been established. A shared value system is a good basis for friendships.

I welcome the recent decision of the U.S. Department of Commerce to grant Kazakhstan the market-economy-country status, a well-deserved recognition of their achievements in reforming their economy and moving away from the Communist past. The next step in this direction should be the repeal of the outdated Jackson-Vanik amendment in relation to Kazakhstan and I call on my colleagues to support the appropriate resolution.

President Nazarbayev, in his recent State of the Nation Address, spoke of the need to continue "pragmatic policies" in all areas. The question of revitalizing the farms of Kazakhstan has been a subject of much debate and was a major topic for the President. The debate over farm policies would probably sound familiar to many Americans. In the foreign affairs area the President noted, "Kazakhstan has managed (over the first decade of independence) to build good stable relationships with all the nations without harming its own strategic interests."

Kazakhstan's firm commitment to the ideal of democracy was also a major topic in President Nazarbayev's speech. He said, "democracy is our deliberate choice for development and we all must work to strengthen this process. We will move step by step, preserving values of our culture founded in mutual assistance, tolerance, cooperation, and mutual respect between the peoples of different ethnic background."

As he closed his speech, President Nazarbayev foresaw closer ties with the United States and even greater emphasis on the development of democratic ideals and the civil society.

We must support Kazakhstan for many reasons. Heading the list are our shared ideals of democracy, a better life for all peoples and the uprooting of terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, Kazakhstan is the hope for political stability and prosperity in Central Asia.

RECOGNITION OF FRIEDREICH'S ATAXIA AWARENESS DAY

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 14, 2002

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Friedrich's Ataxia Awareness Day, which is recognized each year on the third Saturday in May.

Friedreich's ataxia is a life-shortening neurological disorder that is usually diagnosed in childhood. It causes muscle weakness and loss of coordination in the arms and legs; impairment of vision, hearing and speech; scoliosis, diabetes; and a life-threatening heart condition. Most patients need a wheelchair full-time by their twenties. Life expectancy is reduced to early adulthood. There is currently no effective treatment or cure for Friedrich's ataxia.

Although there is no treatment or cure available, Friedrich's ataxia patients and families have more and more reason for real hope. An extraordinary explosion of research findings has followed the identification of the Friedrich's ataxia gene in 1996. Since that discovery, research scientists have learned a great deal about the disorder. We now know what defects in the gene cause the disease, what protein the gene is supposed to produce, what that protein is supposed to accomplish, and why a shortage of the protein results in the cell death that leads to the disease symptoms. Investigators are increasingly optimistic that they are drawing closer to understanding more fully the causes of Friedrich's ataxia and to developing effective treatments.

At the National Institutes of Health and around the world, clinical trials for Friedrich's ataxia are being conducted on drugs that hold real promise. Intensifying cooperation among organizations supporting the research and the multidisciplinary efforts of thousands of scientists and health care professionals provide powerful evidence of the growing hope and determination to conquer Friedrich's ataxia. There is a growing conviction that treatments can and will be developed for this disease and that the resulting insights will be broadly applicable across a wide range of neurological disorders.

On the third Saturday of May, events will be held across our country to increase public awareness of Friedrich's ataxia and to raise funds to support the research that promises treatments for this disease. I applaud the Friedrich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA) for its contributions to these efforts and ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing May 18, 2002, as Friedrich's Ataxia Awareness Day to show our concern for all those families affected by this disorder and to express our